REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are pending, including independent claims 1 and 21. All claims are rejected.

Method claim 23 is rejected as indefinite because it improperly refers to "the music-piece playback instruction section." Applicant has amended claim 23 to overcome this rejection.

All claims are rejected on the basis of prior art. Claims 1, 15-17, 19, 21-24 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0046371 ("Ando"). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Ando provides a description of a system in which, according to one feature, a user can designate still pictures which are to be displayed simultaneously upon playing back a given audio track. Specific pictures are associated with and displayed for each audio track, although the display mode for each audio track can be varied. (E.g., Pars. 16, 134-145, 152-153.)

This is not Applicant's claimed invention. First, Ando does not describe "sequentially playing back video data of a plurality of music pieces recorded in the disk, each for a predetermined time interval" as recited in both independent claims. In other words, the video data for each music piece is played back for the same pre-set time interval in Applicant's claims. The Examiner relies on Fig. 7 of Ando for this feature, but Fig. 7 shows three audio tracks that are each apparently played back entirely and for different lengths of time. This is contrary to Applicant's claimed feature.

Ando also does not conduct such a playback operation "upon receipt of at least one search signal for searching the music pieces recorded in the disk," as claimed. The Examiner relies on PGCI "search pointers," e.g., as identified in Fig. 1. However, these search pointers are recorded on the DVD as part of the management information data structure (e.g., Pars. 85, 96, 120, 126). They are not a "received search signal," nor are they a "signal for searching the music pieces recorded in the disk."

Ando also does not describe "playing audio data of at least one music piece identified from music pieces recorded in the disk and different from at least some of the music pieces whose video data is played back" in response to the search signal. The
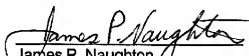
Examiner merely cites to Fig. 7 of Ando and argues that audio object #1 is different than other audio objects. However, to clarify this feature of Applicant's invention claims 1 and 21 have been amended to recite that "the played audio data is played back during the playback of video data of at least one music piece for which the played audio data is not recorded on the disk as corresponding audio data."

Claims 2-4, 6-14, 18 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Ando in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0051625 ("Yamamoto"). Yamamoto is cited only for the teaching that audio data can be recorded and played back separately from video data and that a DVD-video can be used as the disk. Yamamoto does not cure the deficiencies of Ando explained above, so that these claims are patentable for at least the reasons identified above for independent claims 1 and 21.

Claims 5, 20 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Ando and U.S. Patent 5,170,159 ("Kawabata"), or obvious over Ando, Yamamoto and Kawabata. Kawabata is cited only for the teaching that an arbitrary time interval can be set as a playback time interval. However, the cited portions of Kawabata only describe setting a sleep timer for audio/visual apparatuses and do not relate to Applicant's claimed feature of "arbitrarily setting a time interval for which each of the music pieces contained in the disk is sequentially played back." Moreover, Kawabata does not cure the deficiencies of Ando explained above, so that these claims also are patentable for at least the reasons identified above for independent claims 1 and 21.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art and respectfully requests reconsideration of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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